(a) whether with the Eleventh Five Year Plan earmarking huge funds towards strengthening of teacher training institutes, the Planning Commission has asked the NCERT to carry out an evaluation training institutes;

(b) whether, according to the Plan Panel, an assessment is necessary before the fund is allocated, as the teacher education programme did not fare well during the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(c) whether the Plan Panel had asked earlier to conduct assessment of teachers training institutes;

(d) whether the Panel has allocated huge funds without knowing about their exiting state and performance; and

(e) to what extent the Ministry has initiated action in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (e) An allocation of Rs. 4000 crores has been made for the Eleventh Five Year Plan for the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education. A Sub Group under the chairmanship of Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) constituted to make recommendations for the 11th Plan, recommended, apart from strengthening existing components of the Scheme, expansion of the Scheme during the Eleventh Plan. Based on the recommendations of the Sub Group, the proposal of this Department for continuation/revision of the Scheme, for the Eleventh Plan, was considered by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) on 13.11.2007. EFC recommended comprehensive evaluation of the Teacher Education Scheme. Till such evaluation, the existing Scheme may continue without any change in its existing norms and parameters. Accordingly, this Department has entrusted NCERT with the task to make comprehensive evaluation of the Scheme.

Inclusive education for the disabled

214. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has decided to provide 1000 crore inclusive education for the disabled at the secondary stage, that would replace the exciting Integrated Education for the Disabled Children Scheme and expand its ambit, in a big way;

(b) if so, whether the move is likely to benefit six to seven lakh disabled children every year;

(c) whether the scheme has been given a go-ahead by the Planning Commission and the process to get Cabinet approval has started; and

(d) if so, what are the main features of this scheme and to what extent this would help in providing higher education to the disabled children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The Government have approved the Centrally

Sponsored Scheme of 'Inclusive Education for the Disabled at the Secondary Stage' with an approved outlay of Rs. 1000.00 crore for 11th Plan period. The programme is expected to benefit 5.2 lakh disabled children in the last year of the 11th Five Year Plan. The objective of the Scheme is to create enabling environment for the disabled children passing Class VIII to enter secondary stage for which facilities such as aids and appliances, resource room, removal of architectural barrier, special teachers etc. would be provided. Central assistance will be provided at an average rate of Rs. 3000 per child per annum.

Regulatory authority for higher education

215. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Knowledge Commission has recommended that there should be an independent regulatory authority for higher education and has stated that the legislation for creating universities was a formidable barrier;

(b) if so, what are the other main recommendations made by the National Knowledge Commission;

(c) what is the reaction of the Ministry on its recommendations; and

(d) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In its report on higher education, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has also, inter-alia, recommended increasing the number of universities to 1500, raising student fee to at least 20% of the revenues, regulation of higher education through establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, financing of higher education (including better management of assets like land available with universities) and public-private partnerships for setting up new institutions, opportunity for good foreign universities to come to India, salary differentials within and between universities, limiting the role of University Grants Commission to disbursement of grants and maintenance. There is no consensus on the recommendations of the NKC. Teachers' Organizations have not favoured the recommendations. A conference of Vice Chancellors held in October, 2007 had also discussed these recommendations without any endorsement thereof.

The Central Government has constituted a Committee under Prof. Yash Pal to, inter-alia, advise on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education. The terms of reference of the Committee includes:-

(a) To review the functioning of the UGC/AICTE and to critically assess the role of the UGC/AICTE and their preparedness to provide institutional leadership to the emerging demands of access, equity, relevance and quality of higher education/ technical education and the university system.